

Urban and Landscape Perspectives

Volume 9

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Aims and Scope

Urban and Landscape Perspectives is a series which aims at nurturing theoretic reflection on the city and the territory and working out and applying methods and techniques for improving our physical and social landscapes.

The main issue in the series is developed around the projectual dimension, with the objective of visualising both the city and the territory from a particular viewpoint, which singles out the territorial dimension as the city's space of communication and negotiation.

The series will face emerging problems that characterise the dynamics of city development, like the new, fresh relations between urban societies and physical space, the right to the city, urban equity, the project for the physical city as a means to reveal *civitas*, signs of new social cohesiveness, the sense of contemporary public space and the sustainability of urban development.

Concerned with advancing theories on the city, the series resolves to welcome articles that feature a pluralism of disciplinary contributions studying formal and informal practices on the project for the city and seeking conceptual and operative categories capable of understanding and facing the problems inherent in the profound transformations of contemporary urban landscapes.

Making Strategies in Spatial Planning

Knowledge and Values

Maria Cerreta · Grazia Concilio · Valeria Monno
Editors

Editors

Maria Cerreta
Department of Conservation of
Architectural and Environmental Heritage
University of Naples Federico II
Via Roma 402
80132 Naples
Italy
cerreta@unina.it

Grazia Concilio
Department of Architecture and Planning
Polytechnic of Milan
Via Golgi 39
20133 Milan
Italy
grazia.concilio@polimi.it

Valeria Monno
Department of Architecture and Town
Planning
Polytechnic of Bari
Via Orabona 4
70125 Bari
Italy
valeria.monno@libero.it

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Foreword

This provocative collection of essays challenges traditional ideas of strategic spatial planning and opens up new avenues of analysis and research. The diversity of contributions here suggests that we need to rethink spatial planning in several far-reaching ways. Let me suggest several avenues of such rethinking that can have both theoretical and practical consequences.

First, we need to overcome simplistic bifurcations or dichotomies of assessing outcomes and processes separately from one another. To lapse into the nostalgia of imagining that outcome analysis can exhaust strategic planners' work might appeal to academics content to study 'what should be', but it will doom itself to further irrelevance, ignorance of politics, and rationalistic, technocratic fantasies. But to lapse into an optimism that 'good process' is all that strategic planning requires, similarly, rests upon a fiction that no credible planning analyst believes: that enough talk will miraculously transcend conflict and produce agreement. Neither single-minded approach can work, for both avoid dealing with conflict and power, and both too easily avoid dealing with the messiness and the practicalities of negotiating out conflicting interests and values – and doing so in ethically and politically critical ways, far from resting content with mere 'compromise'.

Second, we must rethink the sanctity of expertise. By considering analyses of planning outcomes as inseparable from planning processes, these accounts help us to see expertise and substantive analysis as being 'on tap', ready to put into use, rather than being particularly and technocratically 'on top'. When we understand outcomes as often contingent not simply upon planning processes but upon shifting relations of authority and power, we make spatial planning more complex, but potentially more accountably democratic as well. Expertise becomes not the unsailable province of the academic but now politically accountable, subject to debate, an integral and contestable part of strategic planning processes rather than a privileged framing or decision-making element detached from mechanisms of local or regional voice and accountability.

Third, we might now see strategic planning not so much to provide answers in advance to development questions but rather to provide what we might call 'spaces of deliberative opportunities'. In such spaces, diverse local actors in diverse processes can bring forward creative, if opposing, ideas and suggestions and proposals

in efforts to try to shape urban and regional futures. Here we see strategic planning, as several of the following essays suggest, as not simply a series of instrumental performances but as providing the occasions on and through which spatialised participants articulate their identities and traditions and interests and values and do more than that too: they transform their own and one another's imaginations of what's possible, and not least of all they may actually work to forge the coalitions and pressure and creative organisations to implement their strategic visions.

Fourth, this means we must give up the whipping boy or the scapegoat or the facile complaint that appealing to deliberation in planning must mean some idealistic or romantic appeal to argument and persuasion alone. For 30 years now, planners who have left argumentation largely aside have taught us that public deliberation means facing conflict and so engaging in analytically critical conflict resolution strategies as much as, or indeed more than, it means engaging in any stereotypically rational process of debate or persuasion. Indeed, deliberation itself easily encompasses three quite distinct processes that students of planning have failed to appreciate and that planners have confused practically as well: processes of dialogue, debate and negotiation. The first seeks understanding and mutual recognition through conversation, and it may be facilitated and enhanced to reach those ends and avoid the dangers of talk, talk, endless talk (to say little of disrespect). The second seeks justification and vindication of claims through arguments about what is right or wrong or true or false, and it may be moderated to reach those ends and avoid the dangers of escalation or damaged relationships (to say little of systematic bias). The third, and perhaps only the third, negotiation, seeks agreements on action, commitments to act, through refining and reframing proposals to meet parties' interests, and these processes can be mediated – not merely facilitated or moderated – to produce creative and mutually interest-serving ends and outcomes and avoid, then, the otherwise possible lose–lose agreements we rightly abhor and call 'lousy compromises'.

Fifth, then, this means we must understand strategic spatial planning not only to involve stakeholders 'interactions' and 'networks' but also to call for our careful and critical analysis of their practical engagements and actual negotiations too. As importantly, because processes of negotiation in turn contingently threaten pragmatic agreements that can be mutually inferior to other, quite possible, more mutually satisfying, 'mutual gains' agreements – we come to the essential and inescapable, conflict-addressing, critical role of mediation-like interventions. So we need to introduce some version, a culturally and spatially appropriate version, of mediation skills to be taught in all settings where strategic spatial planning forms part of the agenda at hand.

Strategic spatial planning will call for dialogues to assess traditions and identities, interests and values. If dialogic elements are ignored, recognition of identities and values will be flawed and planning processes will be deeply problematic: simply solving the wrong problems, for example. If elements of debate are ignored, expertise will be squandered and planning will suffer needlessly. If negotiations are ignored, planning will become just pious talk without connections to practical action.

Sixth, then, let us try to find a way amidst the complexities of strategic spatial planning not just to wring our hands, not to equate the presence of conflict with the impossibility of acting and planning well. In the political circumstances in which planning inevitably takes its place, planners must have practical capacities to work in the face of conflict. Conflicts present difficulties, not necessarily impossibilities. So strategic spatial planners must learn to distinguish and then to re-integrate not only distinct institutional moments and processes of dialogue, debate and negotiations but also the outcome-oriented practices of facilitating, moderating and mediating: to produce recognition and understanding, scientifically established bases for action, and actual commitments that serve substantive, spatially defined and rooted interests and values as well.

Seventh, then, let us not forget, in our scepticisms about planners playing de facto mediating roles (among others!), that in politically complex spatial planning processes, mediators no more make multiparty agreements than do mid-wives make babies. Let me repeat this, because it reframes an all-too-common misunderstanding of conflict resolution practice: mid-wives don't make babies; parents do. Mediators do not make agreements; stakeholders do. That's all the more reason that we should explore and refine mediators' roles: to pay more careful attention to the complex, practical opportunities of the diverse deliberative processes that arise systematically in contemporary strategic spatial planning efforts (Forester, 2009).

Ithaca, New York
January 2010

John Forester

Reference

1. Forester, J. (2009). *Dealing with differences: Dramas of mediating public disputes*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Preface

The idea of this book originated in the international School in Evaluation for Planning ‘Small-medium-sized Cities: perspectives of Strategic Planning’, held in Campi Salentina (Southern Italy) in October 2006 and organised by the book’s editors. The school was conceived as an occasion to explore synergies and complementarities between evaluation and planning within the framework of strategic planning.

At the beginning of this century, making strategic spatial plans (Healey, Khakee, Motte, & Needham, 1997) was foremost on planning agendas. It was seen as a proactive approach to ‘govern’ cities and regions facing new developments and challenges determined by globalisation processes under a tough neoliberalism and the rise of a new and diffused awareness of environmental issues. The growing complexity and fragmentation of cities and regions determined by radical changes in production processes, the diffusion of new technologies, the crises of representative democracy, the increasing immigration flows, the raise of environmental concerns and the accruing of uneven developments required a fresh planning theory and practice inspired by renewed long-term thinking associated with a more realistic and effective approach (Albrechts, 2009). Its main goal was to produce new cities/regions based on the ideal of coexistence among humans and between humans and non-humans. These ideal cities/regions were seen as a collective actor and *demos* (Le Gales, 2002; Kazepov, 2005) able to creatively manage through complex governance processes their urban development by balancing the goal of economic growth with those of sustainability, inclusivity and enlarged democracy.

Although different kinds of strategic planning have been practiced in different contexts, they have flourished in the perspective of the so-called relational approach (Albrechts, 2009). By enabling a profound transformation in terms of both spatial imaginations and institutional innovations, this appeared as the most appropriate ‘technology’ to translate the need of linking long-term thinking with a more realistic and effective approach into practice. In fact, it recognises the need for governments to adopt a more entrepreneurial style of planning in order to enhance cities’ competitiveness, abandoning bureaucratic approaches and involving skills and resources which are external to the traditional administrative apparatus. From being a comprehensive design, strategic spatial planning is reconceptualised as a social process

developing in deliberative arenas through which a range of people in diverse institutional relations and positions come together to design plan-making processes and develop contents and strategies for the management of spatial changes (Healey, 2005).

This process is not thought to generate formal outputs in terms of policy and project proposals; it is conceived as a transformative practice producing a decision framework influencing relevant parties in their future investment and regulation activities. Spatial planning becomes the provider of strategic frames of reference (Albrechts, 2009; Healey, 2006). It is considered an emergent social product in complex governance contexts, with the power to 'frame' discourses and shape action through the persuasive power of their core concepts. Strategic frames which accumulate sufficient power to enrol others, which travel across significant institutional sites of urban governance and which endure through time can shape the future. Crucial to this articulation of planning theory is a conception of the relational complexity of physical and social space. It constitutes the basis of a theory which acts as a balance between what can be fixed and what is left to emerge while imagining better futures. This kind of spatial planning does not refer to the dimension of strategy just in terms of instrumental rationality in order to reduce and treat complex situations; it is able to explore the possible advantages of dealing with (anticipating and, most of all, playing with) the multiple and interacting actors' (and agencies') behaviours (see [Chapter 3](#), this book).

However, by the mid-2000s strategic spatial planning was experiencing difficulties. A new way of looking at, listening to and feeling the relational complexity was suggested as being able to break the impasse (Healey, 2006). Already after a short period of experimentation in strategic spatial planning, some doubts on its efficacy started emerging. The emphatic atmosphere of the beginning of the new millennium showed some feeble but clear symptoms of a crisis about to come. Under a tough neoliberalism, governance processes had been transformed into a smoke-screen for powerful actors (Amin, 2006; Purcell, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2005). A technocratic-physicalist conception of planning kept on dominating planning practice, while cultural and institutional barriers slowed down the pace of institutional change which had been hoped and expected to be reached by means of strategic planning processes.

It was clear that the ideal of strategic planning could be easily used to favour the most aggressive neoliberal models of urban and regional development. The hoped-for institutional innovations and economic social and environmental improvements appeared really hard to reach in practice, even in the most innovative institutional contexts. Its being based on governance processes increasingly used by influential stakeholders compromised the translation of theory into practice. Growing attention was paid to issues concerning discourses in order to understand contextual factors preventing planning from being successful. In peripheral urban and regional areas, strategic planning did not seem able to produce any movements towards the new economy.

The Campi Salentina school on Evaluation in Planning was organised when the hope to change inspired by this new more effective way of planning started to be

challenged by disillusion with strategic planning practice. The school was conceived as an intense dialogue among students and academicians with different perspectives on strategic planning. As usually happens, at the end of the school we realised that it had been much more than a period of training. It became an opportunity in which crucial issues had emerged through debates focusing on the interplay between practice and theory. Specifically, we realised that much of the debate which followed the key lectures challenged a unified vision of strategic planning. The reflections and discussions activated during the week showed that theories and experiences in local contexts were divergent, conflicting and not aligned to a codified concept of strategy and strategic planning. Furthermore, the debate had raised two questions that had only rarely been dealt with as clear way of interpreting the variegated landscape of strategic planning practices.

All the debates which developed during the week seemed to call for renewed attention to issues concerning knowledge and values underlying spatial strategies and strategic planning. In fact the relational strategic planning approach was criticised because of its creative posture which risked glossing over the epistemological and cognitive dimension underlying practices of knowledge production. The school had disclosed knowledge and values by considering them as the origin of diversification and fragmentation of experiences and visions in strategic planning.

Knowledge and values were seen to be effective components of an interpretative framework of such a theoretical and practical diversification and were debated as entities both inspiring and nurturing planning theory and flowing within the myriad planning practices. Analogously, their intriguing interplay made up of convergence, friction, resistance or irremediable distance was also under profound scrutiny. Knowledge and values were considered power engines of relational and communication mechanisms in and for human settlements, and the school started to break into these mechanisms while analysing spatial strategies and strategic planning.

Knowledge and values were also discussed as keys to reintroduce a vision of planning as a field of struggle. As Foucault maintains, changing knowledge implies changing power relationships (Crampton & Elden, 2007). Contrary to the win-win scenario depicted by many theoretical approaches to strategic planning in which the achievement of a shared vision is equalled to the right decision or a transformative change, a focus on knowledge and values allows planning to be reconceptualised as a contested field and to trace the direction in terms of costs and injustices implied by that change. Whose knowledge is it? Whose places are they? What are the values which a planning process is striving for?

We think that these questions are also crucial to reconnect planning to the dialectics of space, a dimension missing from many strategic planning accounts. Usually relegated in closed arenas, the dynamics producing places re-emerge as a field of forces always at work. Friction, resistance and residue are concepts that stand not only for individual subjects but also for collective ones (societies, communities, organisations of any type) and also for places that cannot let themselves be crossed without an imprint or trace being left (Maciocco & Tagliagambe, 2009a, p. 61).

The exploration of knowledge and values mobilised by strategic planning processes also had the power to re-emphasise their relevance in the link between

evaluation and strategic planning. Despite the continuous appeal to integrate evaluation and strategy-making processes, a more mechanistic approach is often adopted in practice, sometime favoured by the diffusion of environmental strategic assessment. The school confirmed that, as Khakee (1998) maintains, evaluation and planning are inseparable concepts. Yet, while in the field of strategic planning evaluation tends to be treated suspiciously because of its technocratic biases, nevertheless, it seems to be more open to hybridisation by the planning field and able to adapt its methods and tools to a more humanised changing world.

This book retains the strategic planning perspective which emerged during the school days because we believe that knowledge and values enable dialogues between different visions of strategy and strategic planning which could offer a new ground for a critical reflection on issues and challenges raised by both the diversity of theoretical interpretations and the theoretical incongruence arising from planning practices. It sees planning as an unstable landscape of theories and practices, constantly challenging the planning itself and being continually adjusted and invented: planning is seen as being 'on the move'. If planning is anything, it is an evolving field which has to change in order to respond to both external changes and changes produced by planning itself. This is a necessity rather than an interior need of planning.

This book, like many others, focuses on the problems and challenges which strategic planning has been facing in recent years; yet, it deals with these issues from a different perspective. It does not take an idea of strategic planning as a more or less good procedure to be followed but as an evolving and challenging critical dialogue between theory and practice. It explores this dialogue in terms of knowledge and value as resources necessary to re-think the concept of strategy in spatial planning critically by considering knowledge and values as key lenses for analysing theoretical positions, processes, practices and outputs of strategising mechanisms. The book is a journey constituted by macro and micro-explorations each of them interconnecting the micro and macro in a way in which the interplay between theory and practice can be evaluated. Consequently, it does not offer a new alternative perspective on strategic planning. It gathers traces and clues on how strategic planning could be reframed.

However, the book represents an evolution compared with the analysis carried out during the school week. It collects keynote lectures which were debated during the school as well as invited papers which improve the dialogue on the complexity and multiplicity of strategies and strategic planning visions and interpretations to be reconnected within the knowledge/values interplay. The discussion is carried out from both theoretical and practical points of view in order to re-conceptualise strategic planning practices as processes contextually 'architecturing' the evolution of value and knowledge structures.

The book is organised in four sections. The first two sections debate the strategic planning approach from a macro-perspective. The former is a disciplinary dialogue looking for normative directions and methods enabling a long-term and dynamic planning approach in relation to urban and regional structural changes. The second section critically observes strategic planning as the materialisation of a

theory mediated by both planning tools and contexts to reflect on the working of its assumptions in practice.

The third and fourth sections turn to a micro-perspective to examine the architecturing of knowledge and values within spatial strategy-making mechanisms. The micro-dimension is explored as a complex environment where macro-phenomena can be generated and kept working both intentionally and not.

The first section of this book dissects the multiple meanings of 'strategy' coexisting in planning and their implication in terms of mobilisation and creation of knowledge and values. These range from the enthusiastic movement towards a relational approach up to more cautious views trying to rescue the dimension of land and conflict or move towards new and experimental ideas. At the same time, we think that such differences also reflect the not always easy interplay between ideal models and the local traditions of planning. Whereas northern European planning promotes a more consensual and procedural strategic shift as the right way of making places in the twenty-first century, the southern context appears more cautious and in some ways opposing the usual colonisation of ideas. These clashes of cultures also reveal the risks implicit in the ideal of the possible imitation and translation of ideas. Imitating can suddenly produce a success of the imitator, but in the long-term it can create idea and action deserts. Luis Albrechts and Klaus Kunzmann emphasise the creative dimension of strategic planning while Alessandro Balducci focuses on the possibility of producing a change through such a perspective.

Luis Albrechts in his chapter exposes the fundamental theoretical pillars at the basis of the relational strategic planning approach. He maintains that in the face of challenges posed by the rapid structural changes affecting urban and regional development a proactive planning is the only appropriate response. This calls for transformative planning practices focused on the structural problems in society, the construction of images or visions of a preferred outcome through scenario building processes and the identification of processes necessary to implement it. Without new ideas about how to tackle the developments and challenges, planning efforts seem futile. Transformative practices require an unconditioned openness to the multiple and different creativity intended as a result of a mixing of the critical analysis of history of places and the exploration of alternative futures and a clear political stand as knowledge and values mobilised in planning are not neutral. Specifically it traces the kind of governance which has the capacity to strengthen creativity, diversity and sustainability. Finally, it sketches challenges to be faced by planners in terms of attitudes and skills.

Klaus Kunzmann highlights how the creativity of planning has to be grounded on the territorial capital as a base for local and regional action. He maintains that, under the pressure of tough competition, a strategic planning approach can help small- and medium-sized cities find a profile enabling them to maintain their economic, social and cultural functions and contrast dangerous processes of peripherisation. In fact, strategic planning through the construction of partnerships of local and regional institutions can generate future-oriented initiatives to be developed and implemented. Such a perspective stresses the importance of the territorial capital as a base for local and regional action. People living in these towns, their competence

and tacit knowledge, their community commitment and their international networks constitute the territorial capital for creative governance, where local and regional institutions in a socio-political environment of mutual trust have to cooperate and complement each other.

Though reflecting on the specific case of the Milan strategic plan, Alessandro Balducci inquiries into the achievements of strategic planning in terms of collective intelligence improvements. However, he argues that if we want an answer to the direct question of what changes strategic planning has been able to introduce, we will only be able to indicate initial, provisional and probably fragile results. For him, it is too early to try to evaluate the outcome of such complex processes. He also wonders whether in order to appreciate the changes introduced by strategic planning it would be better to regard specific practices of strategic planning as an adaptive approach to it in situations of growing complexity and rapid change of dynamic urban regions rather than as deviations from a mainstream conception of strategic planning.

The chapters by Francesco Indovina and Luigi Mazza and Jean Hillier spell out alternative conceptions of strategy to the philosophy of 'sharing', underpinning the relational strategic planning approach from different points of view. Francesco Indovina reminds us that a strategy can only be justified by a situation of conflict. Should we refer to a situation of conflict or to collaboration? This choice demands the interpretation of relationships within society in general and the local community in particular. This re-locates the public administration at the centre of strategic planning. If urban and territorial changes are interpreted as constituting a locus of conflicts where 'contenders', by using their own power and attempting to neutralise their opponents, try to impose their own objectives (interests), then the main purpose of a strategic plan is not to identify general objectives but rather methods (strategic methods) to achieve interventions, actions and policies able to shape and realise pre-defined objectives through a process combining political intentionality, knowledge of the situation and participation. Whether this strategy will lead to some form of 'strategic planning' is less important than the imperative goal the public administration must set for itself: the governance of change.

Luigi Mazza debates strategic planning from a land use and mobility planning perspective. From this specific field of planning a plan represents the solution to land use conflicts. In order to solve them, strategic and land use plans have to be seen as reciprocally enforcing. The whole development process is to be conceived as the result of two parallel circular processes: the strategic one in which a vision is defined, a coalition built and some projects selected; and the (land use) planning one in which the selected projects interact with the land use plan. If a true strategic process is developed, the land use plan becomes the tool used by the locality to register and adjust the outcome of the strategic process. The relationship between the projects selected by the strategic process and the land use plan is not one way but interactive.

Jean Hillier abandons the actor-centred perspective shaping the previous positions to propose a multiplanar theory of planning. She draws on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and looks at spatial planning as strategic navigation

concerned with discovering the options people have as to how to live rather than as a process dealing with judgements and solutions. Planning should not be concerned with understanding the world in terms of practical effectiveness of classificatory representation, but the pragmatic Deleuzean *how*: not so much ‘what does it mean?’ as ‘how does it work?’ Governance, planners and other agents of governance become *experiments* or *speculations* entangled in a series of modulating networked relationships in both rigid and flexible circumstances, where outcomes are volatile, and problems are not ‘solved’ once and for all, but are constantly recast and reformulated in new perspectives.

The second section of the book is a critical analysis of the key concepts underlying strategic planning. It considers their working in practice in relation to goals such as democracy, inclusion, empowerment, equality and ecological development. It challenges fundamental assumptions and beliefs of strategic planning while hinting at the need to invent alternatives to the current planning conceptions and practices which can be not only more accountable and legitimate but also emancipatory. The society in this section suddenly assumes importance, not as “an idealised system, by an alleged compactness and idyllic cohesion, but as a fragmented multitude, divided, dispersed, ramified and broken into pieces, yet capable of finding and hunting out unusual modalities of comparison, convergence and mutual recognition, often based on the awareness of exclusion, rather than the illusion of inclusion. A crucial role is played by ‘voiceless subjects’ and border experiences” (Maciocco & Tagliagambe, 2009b, p. 225).

The chapter written by Rob Atkinson asks to what extent the turn to spatial planning has been able to produce a more integrated and coordinated approach to urban and regional policy. The UK experience seems to confirm the fact that economic development is still the primary strategic driver of regional development compared to environmental sustainability, equality, social inclusion and local empowerment. Furthermore, within ‘integrationist’ approaches lines of accountability and responsibility for policy are often unclear. Instead of being a tool which is magically able to integrate policies and actions in particular spaces and places, and somehow merge them into a nested interlocking hierarchy of policies, spatial planning, at best, can help to expose them and suggest alternative ways of addressing problems.

The transition from government to governance is examined by Panagotis Getimis and Thilo Lang. Getimis examines the shift as a re-orientation away from ‘hierarchies’ towards ‘heterarchies’. He focuses on the opportunities and risks that may come from governance arrangements and on prerequisites for avoidance of governance failure. Governance and contemporary planning processes have not replaced government and conventional planning. It is important for policy-makers to be aware of the co-existence and complementarities of governance modes, avoiding risks and enhancing opportunities for participatory governance, thus ensuring both effectiveness and legitimacy. Thus, new complementarities between the old and the new should be sought, in order not to replace old problems with new ones in the pursuit of greater participation, effectiveness and legitimacy.

The understanding of governance proposed by Thilo Lang is built upon empirical findings in a wide set of urban regeneration cases and interviews carried out with

public and private actors involved in urban development. This chapter compares the forms of governance adopted in medium-sized cities examined through different theoretical modes of urban governance and their specificities. None of the analysed initiatives in the mentioned study can be regarded as the output of such forms of strategic governance. However, the different forms of local governance must be considered as potentially helpful for the successful implementation and operation of local initiatives. Receiving support from individuals or organisations linked to local governance arrangements may also be helpful.

The central issue in Swyngedouw and Monno's chapters is that the consensual logic characterising the post-political city prevents emancipatory futures from emerging.

Valeria Monno argues that strategic planning risks functioning as a governing paralysing meta-cultural frames rather than enabling new urban imagination and institutional change. Within the theoretical framework of the relational strategic planning approach, the conceptualisation of the imagination as construction of executable possibilities offers spatial planning a comfort zone within which socio-economic and environmental crises can be anaesthetised and treated as a set of more or less-known problems and solutions. The exclusion of the 'impossible' prevents the differences/tensions between what is considered possible and impossible from acting as a legitimate source and driver of an emancipatory change.

Erik Swyngedouw argues that alternative non-dystopian environmental futures as political achievements can only emerge from a new non-dualistic nature-society conception. This radically turns the question of sustainability into a question of democracy and the recuperation of the horizon of democracy as the terrain for the cultivation of conflict and the naming of different socio-environmental urban futures. To begin to unpack 'sustainability' we need to recapture the political as the decisive material and symbolic space, as the space from which different socio-environmental futures can be imagined, fought over and constructed. A radical socio-environmental political programme, therefore, has to crystallise around imagining new ways to organise processes of socio-metabolic transformation.

The third section of the book examines the practice of production of knowledge. The mobilisation, organisation and management of distributed knowledge is investigated as something problematic and in need of being managed effectively in plural contexts in order to transform multiple knowledge into a common good and whether this knowledge is used as a resource to shape a vision of the future, or as source for action strongly related to the 'doing' dimension of strategy-making.

The first two chapters of this section explore two different, very different, methodological frameworks considered crucial for capturing and mobilising cognitive resources in complex decision-making environments characterised by uncertainty and dynamicity of components and their related relational frames. Abdul Khakee maintains that use of future studies can make decision-makers aware of the great variety of possibilities lying ahead. The aim of his chapter is to examine some important aspects of the relationship between future studies and planning and to present some models where future studies have been developed as an integral part of urban planning. When used as an integral part of planning processes,

future studies can throw light on hidden dynamics of change which risk being overwhelmed by macroscopic processes. In this respect, future studies are able to unveil many nuances in the polarised space of stereotyped future images, and thus display many unforeseen future possibilities through a recombination of identities and desires within non-hierarchical spaces of co-existence.

The contribution by Nikos Karacapilidis discusses a different methodological frame and explores technological perspectives of knowledge management in multi-actor deliberation processes. He discusses whether and how argumentative collaboration for policy and decision-making can be effectively supported by an appropriately developed information system and considers the relevance of making some portion of the mobilised knowledge explicitly represented and available to actors within and outside the deliberation process, thus enabling the re-telling of the deliberation story and possibly activating learning mechanisms.

Dino Borri introduces the problem of lack of robust scientific attention on knowledge and knowledge-in-action coordination in multi-agent environments. He argues that this limitation is particularly invalidating, as the current generation of spatial plans aims at democratising its traditional expert and top-down approach and enhancing its knowledge contents and multi-logic potentials. By reflecting on knowledge engineering experiments carried out in multi-agent environments, he discusses this topic in relation to two aspects of strategic interactive planning specifically concerning the change of frames and the appropriateness of planning rationales in dealing with multi-agent environments.

Milan Zeleny describes the experience of strategic planning in Zlin (Czech Republic) with the framework of a peculiar interpretation of strategy-making also related to the history of this urban context and strongly connected to the recognition of knowledge as a strategic resource for this specific context and for the planning process in general. According to Zeleny knowledge in complex environments can be looked at as 'what is done and can be done', and the example of Zlin is used to shape such a vision concretely at the urban strategy-making level.

Very close to the vision of knowledge and knowledge management in strategy-making given by Zeleny, Grazia Concilio describes strategy as a work in progress being modelled by a knowledge and practice 'bricolaging'. Knowledge and practices are considered as reciprocally shaping and can be composed into a bricolage throughout an empirical exploration of knowledge and practices themselves; spaces for this kind of exploration are called 'strategic episodes'. This vision of strategy and strategy-making is also investigated referring to the strategy-making process in a Natural Reserve in southern Italy. She proposes looking at strategies as macro-phenomena of strategy micro-foundations to be recognised as emergent and/or intentionally activated at the micro-level of complex spatial realities.

The fourth section of the book is concerned with exploring the role and the dynamics of values, taking into account differences in their relationship to knowledge. This section reflects on the role of values and evaluation processes and demonstrates how a 'value-based approach' (complex, multi-dimensional, tangible and intangible values) can affect strategic thinking and dialogue with diverse forms of knowledge involved in planning. Here evaluation seems to be a field open to

hybridisation by the planning field and in search of adapting its methods and tools to a more humanised changing world.

Luigi Fusco Girard opens the section starting with the concept of complex social values and focuses on contextual material and immaterial relations as crucial elements for human sustainable development. Tangible and intangible values are the components of cultural resilience and creativity, and evaluation becomes a critical process supporting actions and producing new values. Fusco Girard assumes an 'interpretative' approach to evaluation which is able to transform experiences carried out all over the world into indispensable resources for collective learning and human sustainable development in local contexts.

Values and evaluations are also the focus of Giuseppe Munda's chapter which focuses on the opportunities offered by evaluation to deal with uncertainty and complexity of socio-spatial systems. Evaluation is discussed considering its implications in planning and referring especially to the limits of traditional evaluation models when dealing with the reflexive nature of the real world. He discusses how multi-dimensional approaches to evaluation can better respond to the need for learning and co-evolution of current social systems. The proposed Social Multi-Criteria Evaluation is part of this perspective.

Federico Sittaro and Begum Ozkaynak propose two different applications of the Social Multi-Criteria Evaluation underlying the need to develop bottom-up decision-making processes. Federico Sittaro, starting by describing the case of funds allocation in a complex multi-level and multi-organisation environment in an environmental sensitive area, discusses evaluation problems like the multi-scale issue and the problem of accountability, thus posing crucial questions: how can trust be operationally created and activated as a resource for development? To what extent can local actors or institutions be given power to make decisions in contexts where decision-making problems reach an international level?

The chapter by Begum Ozkaynak, looking at a Turkish example, directs attention to the fact that defining objectives and setting priorities of urbanisation is strongly challenged by the increasing influence of goals like global economic integration and competitiveness in the global marketplace. She considers the struggle for local strategies to be of any effectiveness with regard to local identity and culture but also to be formed and reformed according to the logic of macro-level factors which are not always compatible with the local ones.

Finally, starting from the conviction that a decision-making situation is an 'opportunity' and not a problem, Maria Cerreta focuses on the inseparability of evaluation from planning. Evaluation and planning are seen as interdependent and mutually shaping. Together they give rise to strategy-making processes rich in feedback and interaction where decisions can be nothing else than micro-decisions. Evaluation is a way to activate learning throughout planning and is conceptualised as 'thinking through complex values'. In this perspective, the evaluation/planning interplay can seize the 'opportunity' to make knowledge diversity and multiplicity activate a multiplicity of multi-dimensional values able to generate strategic objectives and actions. Strongly dependent on both the context and the decision situation, evaluation cannot be approached within the framework, however complex, of any

methodological structure: a combination of techniques is envisaged to create an adequate and 'situated' evaluation environment.

At the time of writing this introduction cities and regions are in the middle of a tough economic crisis which makes future structural changes radically uncertain while reshaping forms of urbanisation. Many of the premises and hopes which were the foundation of the relational strategic planning approach are showing their limits. Among these: the idea that a more direct inclusion of the 'market' could solve most urban problems; the belief that governance processes would solve social justice issues concerning social justice of urban and regional development; and the conviction that ecological modernisation of the cities and regions would significantly reduce environmental impacts of urbanisation. Nevertheless, confidence that a relational strategic planning approach represents the most appropriate way to imagine and manage urbanisation processes, though with a more contextual sensibility, survives. This book questions this approach in the attempt to disclose its potentialities by analysing its most relevant problems and failures and also by looking for strategic approaches which are more sensitive to the complexity of places.

It discusses some unsolved issues that strategic spatial planning has to face. They concern: the role governments play in shaping spatial futures; how to expand the horizons of democracy; the need to return to the city, and in general to human settlements, by strengthening the link between strategic planning and critical spatial studies; a critical examination of some unquestioned planning goals such as sustainability; an action-oriented approach which ignores the differences and tensions among the imminent and immanent; the lack of paying robust scientific attention to knowledge and knowledge-in-action production and coordination in plural environments without which planning has difficulty in promoting learning and changes of frames; finally, the issue of and the need for rethinking evaluation less in terms of a monitoring and control system and more as fresh engagement with the issues concerned, thus enabling evaluation and planning to be dealt with as activities reciprocally shaping each other.

Napoli, Italy
Milano, Italy
Bari, Italy

Maria Cerreta
Grazia Concilio
Valeria Monno

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Napoli, Italy
Milano, Italy
Bari, Italy

Maria Cerreta
Grazia Concilio
Valeria Monno

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Contributors

Louis Albrechts Department of Architecture, Urbanism and Planning, Catholic University of Leuven, Kasteelpark Arenberg 51, 3001 Heverlee, Belgium, louis.albrechts@asro.kuleuven.be

Rob Atkinson Cities Research Centre, University of the West of England, BS16 1QY, Bristol, UK, rob.atkinson@uwe.ac.uk

Alessandro Balducci Department of Architecture and Planning, Polytechnic of Milan, 20133 Milan, Italy, sandro.balducci@polimi.it

Dino Borri Department of Architecture and Town Planning, Polytechnic of Bari, 70125 Bari, Italy, d.borri@libero.it

Maria Cerreta Department of Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage, University of Naples Federico II, 80132 Naples, Italy, cerreta@unina.it

Grazia Concilio Department of Architecture and Planning, Polytechnic of Milan, 20133 Milan, Italy, grazia.concilio@polimi.it

John Forester Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University, Ithaca, 14853 NY, USA, jff1@cornell.edu

Luigi Fusco Girard Department of Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage, University of Naples Federico II, 80132 Naples, Italy, girard@unina.it

Panagiotis Getimis Panteion University of Political and Social Sciences, 17671 Kalithea, Athens, Greece, getimisp@gmail.com

Jean Hillier School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, Newcastle University, NE1 7RU Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, j.s.hillier@ncl.ac.uk

Francesco Indovina Faculty of Urban and Regional Planning, IUAV University of Venice, 30135 Venice, Italy, indovina@iuav.it

Nikos Karacapilidis Industrial Management and Information Systems Lab, University of Patras, 26 504 Rio Patras, Greece, nikos@mech.upatras.gr

Abdul Khakee Department of Urban Planning and Environment, Royal Institute of Technology, 100 44 Stockholm, Sweden, ablkhe@infra.kth.se

Klaus R. Kunzmann Department of Spatial Planning in Europe, Technical University of Dortmund, 44227 Dortmund, Germany, klaus.kunzmann@udo.edu

Thilo Lang Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, 04329 Leipzig, Germany, mail@thilolang.de

Luigi Mazza Department of Architecture and Planning, Polytechnic of Milan, 20133 Milan, Italy, luigi.mazza@polimi.it

Valeria Monno Department of Architecture and Town Planning, Polytechnic of Bari, 70125 Bari, Italy, valeria.monno@libero.it

Giuseppe Munda Department of Economics and Economic History, University of Barcelona, 08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona), Spain, giuseppe.munda@uab.cat

Begüm Özkaynak Department of Economics, Boğaziçi University, 34342 Istanbul, Turkey, begum.ozkaynak@boun.edu.tr

Federico Sittaro Médecins Sans Frontières, 1090 Brussels, Belgium, federico.sittaro@gmail.com

Erik Swyngedouw School of Environment and Development, The University of Manchester, Manchester, M60 1QD, UK, erik.swyngedouw@manchester.ac.uk

Milan Zeleny Graduate School of Business Administration, Lincoln Centre, Fordham University, NY 100123 New York, USA, mzeleny@fordham.edu